

# GUILTY



*U.S. District Judge Carlton Reeves read this speech to three young white men before sentencing them for the death of a 48-year-old black man named James Craig Anderson in a parking lot in Jackson, Mississippi, one night in 2011.*

“New generations have attempted to pull Mississippi from the abyss of moral depravity in which it once so proudly floundered<sup>1</sup>. Despite much progress and the efforts of the new generations, these three defendants are before me today: Deryl Paul Dedmon, Dylan Wade Butler and John Aaron Rice. They and their co-conspirators ripped off the scab<sup>2</sup> of the healing scars of Mississippi ... causing her (our Mississippi) to bleed again. [...]

“In the Mississippi we have tried to bury, when there was a jury verdict for those

who perpetrated crimes and committed lynchings in the name of White Power ... that verdict typically said that the victim died at the hands of persons unknown. [...]

“Today, though, the criminal justice system (state and federal) has proceeded methodically, patiently and deliberately seeking justice. Today we learned the identities of the persons unknown ... they stand here publicly today. [...]

“Justice, however, will not be complete unless these defendants use the remainder of their lives to learn from this experience and fully commit to making a positive difference in the New Mississippi. And, finally, the court wishes that the defendants also can find peace.”

*npr.org, 2015*

## WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

THEY KILLED A 48-YEAR-OLD BLACK MAN

DO THEY DESERVE DEATH PENALTY?